



# The Rise of Crime in Affordable Housing in Suburbs, Case of Iran

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## ARTICLE INFO:

### Article history:

Received 17 June 2018  
Accepted 20 July 2018  
Available online 12 October 2018

### Keywords:

Affordable housing;  
Crime; Suburbs;  
Iran;  
Mehr houses.

## ABSTRACT

*Most of Housing is one of the fundamental needs for human to respond their primary needs such as food, rest, cleaning and having family, in other words every thing that related to the needs of body and soul of human. Nowadays by increasing the population in the world the suitable shelter become a real problem. In the point of economic also the prices of the houses increase too much so its not affordable for low-income people to have shelter easily. After the revolution in Iran country there is a huge immigration from the rural part to metropolitan areas. Most of these peoples belong to low-income family, new couples and labors. Governments try to solve this problem by creating some policies. Mehr houses is a kind of affordable housing which is the policy of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> government urban and city program. Most of these type of houses located out of city centers, in suburbs. The location reduces the quality and satisfaction of the citizens about these type of houses. This election of the land cause decreases the success of government about their policy. The aim of this study is to analyzing the crime in affordable houses that located in suburbs area. This research will answer the important factor that cause crime in affordable housing in suburban's. The case study in this research is Mehr houses that created for low-income people in Iran. This research analyzed the factors which may cause to raise the crime in that area based on the literature review and previous analysis by different theories in this field. Data is collected by literature review, news, books, papers. The result of this research confirm the possibility of Mehr affordable houses in suburbs transfer to the area that raise the crime.*

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CONTEMPORARY URBAN AFFAIRS (2019), 3(2), 137-143  
<https://doi.org/10.25034/ijcua.2018.4710>

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## 1. Introduction

Shelter is one of the most important essential needs and legal rights of human being. Dwelling could protect the citizens from the cold and hot weather, animals and social harmful factors in the society. According to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements in 1996 the one fifth of people in the world are

suffering from the low quality. Some of the people don't have any house. They live in shanty places that caused important problem

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for health of family. They also increased the crime in world (Kjellstrom, 2007).

After the industrial revolution, Urbanization process has grown increasingly. Parallel to this issue the lack of housing is grew up (Hardin, 2009). In other view lack of housing is the important problem from the ancient time for human being. In different periods the governments try to find some solution to decrease the deterioration of this problem. In different countries there are some solution for this problem. The lack of housing in under developing countries is much more important and problematic. Iran as an under-developing and third world countries by creating some policies attempt to help the citizens to have the best condition for their houses. One of these policies is Mehr houses project. Beginning of this idea goes back to 2007, from the ninth and tenth housing and urban policy program in Iran (Alipour, 2015). The major typicality of Mehr houses is that the government removed land prices. Due to this policy most of these projects is out of the city centers and in suburban's. This cause an important problem for the citizens (Ivani, 2014). Assistant director of urban and city development in Iran said that the Mehr houses become a modern suburban's. This could be so harmful for urban and city development. He mentioned that to have a better city, we have to focus on physical structure of the city. It is also essential to attention to social quality of the houses. From other view, suburban areas due to their unfavorable environmental situation and elements, and social and cultural heterogeneous tissue, are known as most fertile areas of crime (URL 1).

Most citizens in these houses belong to low-income people. These people categorized as new couples, the ones under the poverty line or a little above. These people their economic life is not easy (Karshenasan, 2013). The other groups that they lived in Mehr houses are immigrants from the rural part or small cities to big cities. They do this immigration to have better job and quality of life.

## 2.Theoretical Background

In this part of the study, the author gives some theoretical information about the housing and their environment. One of the theorist which is talked about suburban was Robert E Park. Park in the paper "Human migration and marginalized man" Mentioned that suburban is the result of the economical and political operation (Park, 1928). The other study is belonging to Ernest Burgess and Louis Wirth.

They stated that the reason caused the suburban is concentration of the poor people in the area that there is no any facility (Pickvance, 2013). In the liberal view, phenomenology of the suburban areas as a reality is acceptable. They try to find some solution to have better quality in these areas. They terminated suburban topic by giving the land in different shape, give the loan and also control the government land (Rogers, 2011). The forward thinkers were introduced the title that is called "aviary housing" that they are known as un residential functional which located in residential area (Battle-Fisher, 2014). Social relation is one of the essential needs for tenants. These need will be answered by different functional services next to their dwellings. These accommodations are part of the daily life and they should be accessible for every one. Lack of access easily to these facilities cause health problem such as physical and spiritual. These services categorized as therapeutic services, kindergarten, schools, daily bazars, entertainment services. It is advised that the location of these functions in the housing area could be possible while the streets are omitted. Different functions should not exist in the same areas and the houses area should be separated from these functional services (Doroudi, 2014).

There is another view that is belong to health of soul. This theory is against the previous one. Most attention is based on health of soul instead of environmental needs. This theory believes that using the forward thinker's theory in housing and cities make the place non-dynamic, uniform and eerie and caused undesirable attitude from the citizens that could harm to soul health of the citizens. The main idea of this theory is categorized as: 1. emotional dynamics of space and environment, 2. attention to principle of neighborly relations as maintaining the values and traditions, 3. attention to principles of streets as physical solid foundation of city. One of the prominent thinkers in this field is Jane Jacobs. Based on her idea if the urban neighborhoods are more diverse get more attractive. She beliefs that it is better in every district more than two functions exist. She also mentioned, it is better to mix the residential function and commercial function together. The stores located in the ground floors of apartments and the upper floors belong to the residential function (Jacob, 1961). This theory makes the place much more safe than the previous theory.

There is another theory based on the suburban's in non developed countries from the phenomenology view of Peter Lloyd. He believes that its better to see the suburban's from the immigrant's view and he called these type of houses slums of hope. He did some studies based on these type of houses. He stated that persons who lives in slums houses, most of them are active person. They have positive spirit and they do not give up in their undesirable life. Their attempt to build the temporary shelter shows their positive spirit. Lloyd and Smith believes that the governments could help these people by using them as a worker to solve housing problem. This may cause that the other rural citizens want to immigrant to big cities. For analyzing this situation, it is better to see from a rural immigrant point of view which doesn't have home in the cities. Due to their opinion its very good that they could have shelter and brings hope for them. From the other view, they don't have better life in rural part because most of them are poor people. Lloyd believes that its better to study the reason that cause the people immigrate from rural part to big cities and their expectation from future for their family. Mostly they looking for better life and they try to have better one (McCatty, 2004). From crime view, there is theorist which is named Newman and he wrote a book named "Defensible space theory" in 1972. He described his ideas about the prevention in crime and having safety neighborhood.

Another research was done by Committee tasked to study the issue of violence and crime and delinquency in France that is guided by Mr. Alen Perfit. The result confirms that one of the factors which increase the crime in France is population density. The other result of this research is the relation between crime and deviations. the last one result is quality of housing. Population density and living in the large urban complex reduce the sense of security. Nervous people could loose their control and increase the anger in these areas (Babaei, 2016).

### 3. The concept of marginalization

The experts and scholars in theory related to the urban city have provided different explanation of Suburbia. They believe that the people who live in marginalized area are located in the economical region of the city. but they didn't absorb to the social and economical system. Charles Abrams believe that suburbs are the process of capturing urban areas to provide the housing. Attraction

of the city and welfare in the city, makes them to immigrate from their home town and absorb them to the industrial poles and labor market. Most of them are immigrants from the rural part to big cities to have better life (Henderson, 2013). Interpretation which is exist about suburbs categorized as: 1. destruction part of a city or building, 2. lack of therapeutic facilities, 3. population density in housing unit, 4. lack of comfort, 5. face danger of natural causes such as flood, 6. lack of security, 7. suitable place for crime.

### 4. History of marginalization

Marginalization is a social phenomenon, which its not belong to the current century, it has rout in the previous centuries. This phenomenon is existing in developed countries and under developing countries. The differences between these two is belong to the historical routes and social and physical behavior. Iran is not immune from this phenomenon. Situation of the other countries such as brazil, India, Peru and some African countries are much more worst than Iran country (Zebardast, 2006). In Iran before the 1961, the growth of suburbia has slow speed. the percentage of the city population is 33% of the whole country population. By the implementation of land reform in that decade, and increase in oil income in the 70<sup>th</sup> decade, the population of the cities increase in a more speed. In 1978, the city population is 64% and increased a lot (Fanni, 2006). This population should have the shelter so they moved to suburban. Because in these areas the price of the land is cheap. It is possible that gradually they transferred to the cities.

### 5. The main causes that rise of suburbanization

There are the specific factors that cause the suburbanization based on the theorist. Mieszkowski in 1993 describes them in his paper "The causes of metropolitan suburbanization". These factors are categorized as:

1. Head of family is low-income, 2. land price high, 3. Official cost of construction high 4. Cost of rent is high, 5. High cost of urban life, 6. Lack of zoning and inappropriate land use makes the mix of function, 7. big scale land is not affordable for low-income people, 8. immigration from rural part to small and big cities, 9. Immigration from the city centres to the suburbs, 10. Government and public and private offices has the important impact on the formation of suburbs.

## 6. General descriptions of marginalized areas

Most important factor that makes the other people get sad for the people who live there is, the poor appearance of this area. Most of the houses are destroyed. They have poor condition. The roads and streets are narrow. Fire stations, emergency car or police car could not pass from these slim areas.

This study categorized the general typicality of the marginalized areas as described beneath based on literature review in this field.

### 6.1 Low levels of public health

These areas are poor in public and private health. The garbage's are accumulate there. government do not collect them. These areas have problem in sewage disposal, noise pollution and air pollution (Macfarlane, 2000).

### 6.2 The lack of formal job and sufficient income

Most of the families that live in suburbs they don't have official jobs. The reason of this issue is that they don't have expertise and skills. They have pseudo jobs. Some of them have criminal jobs such as: vendors, retail coupons, begging, stealing trash, dealing drugs and alcohol (Kneebone, 2015).

### 6.3 Subcultures

They have subcultures that it remains from the previous families which is lived there before. They have suffered from cultural poverty. Its very hard for the citizens to adopted to city culture (Gullestad, 1983).

### 6.4 Addiction

The main reasons that could addiction happened are categorized as: poverty, unemployment, lack of proper programs to fill leisure, social and economic inequalities and the availability of drugs. In suburbs most of these factors are exist. Addiction is visible in youth. Buy and sell of drug is increase day by day in these areas (Levengood, 1973).

### 6.5 The impact of social marginalization for security threats

Suburbs are the areas that they are prone to crime. Lack of security monitoring, existence of too many poor people, low level of literacy, lack of adequate lighting and poor environmental situation bring the opportunity for criminals to take refuge there (Lavrakas, 1982). Young people who lived there with their specific culture, everyday go to city centre to find appropriate job. Because they are not expert or professional in any field, mostly they do Peddlers, hanging stand, cigarette sales, work in the field of vegetable. They become as an un useful person for the city. These unspecialised jobs bring criminal for them. Most of the addicted persons, they don't have professional jobs. Another problem which has

harmful affect on citizens is health problem. These problems are genital disease and Aids.

## 6.6 The crimes which is belong to suburbs area

Each environment has its identity and crimes which is belong to that specific environment. Robbery, murder, collective disputes, threat to public health and environmental pollution, addiction and trafficking in drugs and alcohol... are the crimes that belongs to suburbs area.

Robbery happens because of the poverty, jobless, addiction and.... In most of the situations they go to the predominantly affluent neighborhoods and medium class areas for robbery (Alba, 1994). In marginalized area its common to have theft in electricity, water, gas and also telephone. The mass housing projects and single houses in this area, from the first step of construction they don't have these facilities. So the citizens try to bring theses facilities by hidden pipes and hidden wires from the nearest area including residential, industrial, commercial and services.

There are some reasons that could cause murder happened such as: Conflict of subcultures, hostility and festering disputes, profiteering, hurting honor, accidental conflicts and addiction.

These factors are visible in suburbs area. Most of the murder locating in marginalized area. Also, most of the murderer happened in these areas. Collective disputes is the most common crime for the suburbs area. This happened because most of the citizens are immigrant people from rural part. They live close to each other. When the argument happened it gets big fight and maybe cause somebody murder (Tacoli, 2006). Distribution of the drugs in these areas are easy. Because they feel safe in suburbs. Lack of education and being jobless bring too much pressure on them. They try to forget these hard situations by using drugs. Some of the youths which live in suburbs are selling drugs.

## 7. Methodology

In this research based on the literature review such as newspaper, articles, books and observation, analysing the main factors that cause increase crime in Mehr affordable houses projects in suburban area as a case study.

## 8. Mehr affordable houses project

After the revolution in Iran in 1979 there is a huge amount of migration from rural part to small and big cities. Government in different period try to solve the housing problem by creating some policies. From the other side the

economic aspect of dwelling also brings too many problems for the ones who don't have any houses (Kalili, 2015). In the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> urban and city development program government create a new program which is called Mehr affordable housing. These projects are located in small and big cities and belong to the low-income people. The main factor of these project is that the government omit the land price. So related to this issue most of the projects are located in suburbs area. The land price over there is cheaper than inside of the city. The citizens of these projects are youth. Most of them are not educated person (Zanjani, 2011).

Based on the government policy in 2007 the applicants for Mehr houses projects are categorized

as:

- 1- Lacking in land or housing estate
- 2- No history of using state resources
- 3- Five years of residence in demand
- 4- Married or head of household

5- The priority is with whom the monthly income is less than twice of minimum wage law issue work or employments country (Babaei, 2016). Mehr houses project with a high population density indicator, Separation and segregation, immigration, distance and lack of facilities are at risk of crime. These factor shows that there is no any deep study in selecting of the land and construction of the building for Mehr houses projects. The government has a weakness in Mehr affordable houses policy. One of the most important problem that caused crime in Mehr affordable houses is that too many people with different cultures in a small public area has a negative impact for the tenants. These can cause to create crime. Most of the citizens in Mehr project are working far from their house. The amount percentage of youth people are much more than the other ages. They need to be under the control of their parents. These young children should spend lots of their time in the way to city centre. These suburb houses cause the reduction in the parents control. Most of the lands around these projects are not constructed yet. They are still arid. There are too many immigrants among the citizens with different cultures. These differences cause raise quarrel among them. The square meter of the houses is very small. It is not adequate even for small families. They used to spend most of their free time in the public open areas close to their houses. The lack of entertainment facilities in suburbs area cause that teen ages spend their times in the street and public areas. They are

not close to their family. They can easily learn criminal attitudes. These cause much more separation between families and their children's. It is harmful for family health. In suburb areas far from city center they are living mass of young population which they are under the average of education and economic situation in small place without necessary amenities and services facilities. The whole situation could be harmful for society and increase the crime in that area.

Separation and segregation is another important factor that increase the possibility of crime. The separation happened while some areas have more or less of a group of people with different social, economical, income classes. Each group selected an area for living or sometimes they forced to live in an area. So each district has its own identity and characteristic. Most of the poor areas and their mass houses suffer from scourge of crime. Mehr houses project could be such a kind of place. Because they are separated from the city centers and all the facilities inside of the city. Mehr houses are called modern ghettos or modern suburbs. Ghettos are represents life and the constraints of a minority among a majority of a big city. Ghetto is the result of ecological segregation, the separation of religious, racial, and sometimes the separation of poverty and socio-economic separation, from the other part of the city. From the physical view ghettos are the same as other areas but in social and cultural characteristic they have some problems. In government projects that build houses for low-income people this problem is possible to happened. But it is against of the government policy that these houses transfer to poor ghettos. Mehr houses projects are separated the citizens from the city centre by selecting the lands in suburbs. These projects separate the social-economical classes. Because these houses belong to poor or low-income people. The children of these families feel baseness when they go to the school. They compare themselves with their friends that they belong to other social-cultural classification in the society.

Immigration is one of the factors that increase the crime. In Mehr houses project there is a rule that the owner should live in that city at least five years. But this rule does not apply to these projects. It means that the government didn't attention to the families' background of living city. Also they create another rule that could cover this rule. Buy and selling in these project is legal. The owner could sell to whom which is

not live before in that city. This rule helps the rural people to immigrate easier to the big cities such as Tehran. The combination of different cities citizens and gather together makes the subcultural happened. This issue can increase the cultural differences. By this situation the rate of internal conflicts gets high that crime could have happened more easily. Mehr houses project are far from the cities. It is bringing too much trouble for the women's and children who lived there. Most of these projects suffer from lack of transportation facility. Traffic between these houses and city center could raised the crime mostly for women and children. They live in poor family so its not affordable for all of the families to have private car for transportation.

The other reason that could raise the crime is the lack of entertainment facilities. These shortages have much more affect in youth. In their free time they should spend their time in street instead going to cinemas, park or other entertainment areas.

## 9. Conclusion

In this paper two important factors were analyzed related to the housing that is one of the most and essential need for humans. These factors are categorized as suburbanization and crime. Due to immigration from the rural part to city, the head of the family is low-income. The price of land is cheaper. The rents are lower. These factors make the suburbs better than city areas for living for low-income people. But the quality of these areas are not satisfy the citizens. It is bringing some problems for them such as: low level of public health, addiction, lack of formal job and sufficient income and also subcultures. The other problem which is harmful for family in these area is related to the social factor problems such as crime. Poverty, low level of culture is the most important factor that raise the crime in suburbs area. The crimes are containing robbery, murder, trafficking in alcohol and drugs and addiction. Mehr houses are affordable house in suburbs area. These houses based on literature review which is described deeply in this study, possible to transfer to criminal areas. Government try to solve shortage of houses for low-income people. They should study more deeply. These areas could be so harmful for health of family and health of society. All the families which is living in Mehr houses, belongs to low-income family. Most of them are immigrants from the rural part to city areas with different cultures. All of these factors could help to raise the crime. Finally, it is suggested to government to study

deeply in all factors related to the housing and environment for construction affordable houses to have better and healthy society.

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